



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., hugs Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of N.Y., after she spoke on the House floor at the Capitol in Washington Thursday, Nov. 17, 2022.

Associated Press

Pelosi to step aside from Dem leadership, remain in Congress

By LISA MASCARO

AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Thursday that she will not seek a leadership position in the new Congress, making way for a new generation to steer the party after Democrats lost control of the House to Republicans in the midterm elections. Pelosi announced in a spirited speech on the House floor that she will step aside after leading Democrats for nearly 20 years and in the aftermath of the brutal attack on her husband, Paul, last month in their San Francisco home. The California Democrat, who rose to become the nation's only woman to wield the speaker's gavel, said she would remain in Congress as the representative from San Francisco, a position she has held for 35 years, when the new Congress convenes in January. "I will not seek re-

election to Democratic leadership in the next Congress," she said. "For me, the hour has come for a new generation to lead the Democratic caucus that I so deeply respect." Now, she said, "we must move boldly into the future."

Pelosi received a standing ovation after her remarks, and lawmakers and guests one by one went up to offer her hugs, many taking selfies of a moment in history. President Joe Biden spoke with Pelosi in the morning and congratulated her on her historic tenure as speaker of the House. "History will note she is the most consequential Speaker of the House of Representatives in our history," Biden said in a statement, noting her ability to win unity from her caucus and her "absolute dignity."

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Metabolic Foundation testing air quality sensor



Aruba wins singles championship in the Aruba Open Beach Tennis Championships 2022



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Pelosi to step aside from Dem leadership, remain in Congress



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., acknowledges applause from lawmakers after speaking on the House floor at the Capitol in Washington Thursday, Nov. 17, 2022.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

It's an unusual choice for a party leader to stay on after withdrawing from congressional leadership, but Pelosi has long defied convention in pursuing power in Washington.

In an interview with reporters after her announcement, Pelosi said she won't endorse anyone in the race to succeed her and she won't sit on any committees as a rank-and-file lawmaker. She said the attack on her husband "made me think again about staying." But in the end, after the election, she decided to step down.

"I quite frankly, personally, have been ready to leave for a while," she said. "Because there are things I want to do. I like to dance, I like to sing. There's a life out there, right?"

During her remarks on the House floor, Pelosi recapped her career, from seeing the Capitol the first time as a young girl with her father — a former congressman and mayor — to serving as speaker alongside U.S. presidents and doing "the people's work."

"Every day I am in awe of the majestic miracle that is American democracy," she said.

Democrats cheered Pelosi as she arrived in the chamber at noon. On short notice, lawmakers filled the House, at least on the Democratic side, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer joined. He later joined a throng of lawmakers and hugged and kissed Pelosi on the cheek.

The Speaker's Gallery filled with Pelosi staff and guest. Some Republicans, including some newly elected members, also attended, though House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy, who's seeking the speakership in the new Congress, did not, telling reporters afterward that he was "busy, unfortunately."

Earlier, Pelosi noted in a statement after The Associated Press called control of the chamber that, in the next Congress, House Democrats will have "strong leverage over a scant Republican majority."

Pelosi was twice elected to the speakership and has led Democrats through consequential moments,

including passage of the Affordable Care Act with President Barack Obama and the impeachments of President Donald Trump. Her decision Thursday paves the way for House Democratic leadership elections next month when Democrats reorganize as the minority party for the new Congress.

Pelosi's leadership team, with Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland and Democratic Whip James Clyburn of South Carolina, has long moved as a triumvirate. All now in their 80s, the three House Democratic leaders have faced restless colleagues eager for them to step aside and allow a new generation to take charge.

Hoyer said after Pelosi's remarks that "it is the time for a new generation of leaders" and that he will also step down from leadership but stay in Congress. Clyburn, the highest-ranking Black American in Congress, has said he expects to stay in Congress next year and hopes to remain at the leadership table.

Democratic Reps. Hakeem Jeffries of New York, Kath-

erine Clark of Massachusetts and Pete Aguilar of California have similarly moved as a trio, all working toward becoming the next generation of leaders. Jeffries could make history if he enters the race to become the nation's first Black speaker of the House. After Pelosi spoke, Clyburn released a statement saying he looks forward "to doing whatever I can to assist our new generation of Democratic Leaders, which I hope to be Hakeem Jeffries, Katherine Clark and Pete Aguilar."

One idea circulating on Capitol Hill was that Pelosi and the others could emerge as emeritus leaders as they pass the baton to new Democrats.

First elected in 1987, Pelosi has been a pivotal figure in American politics, long ridiculed by Republicans as a San Francisco liberal while steadily rising as a skilled legislator and fundraising powerhouse. Her own Democratic colleagues have intermittently appreciated but also feared her powerful brand of leadership.

Pelosi first became speak-

er in 2007, saying she had cracked the "marble ceiling," after Democrats swept to power in the 2006 midterm elections in a backlash to then-President George W. Bush and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. When she was poised in 2018 to return as speaker, in the Trump era, she vowed "to show the power of the gavel."

Pelosi has repeatedly withstood leadership challenges over the years and had suggested in 2018 she would serve four more years as leader. But she had not discussed those plans more recently.

Typically unsentimental, Pelosi let show a rare moment of emotion on the eve of the midterm elections as she held back tears discussing the grave assault on her husband of nearly 60 years. Paul Pelosi suffered a fractured skull after an intruder broke into their home in the middle the night seeking the Democratic leader. The intruder's question — "Where is Nancy?" — echoed the chants of the pro-Trump rioters at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, as they hunted for Pelosi and tried to stop Congress from certifying Joe Biden's election victory over Trump.

David DePape is being held without bail on attempted murder and other charges in what authorities said was a political attack. Police said DePape broke in and woke up Paul Pelosi, and the two struggled over a hammer before DePape struck the 82-year-old on the head.

Paul Pelosi was hospitalized for a week but is expected to recover, though his wife has said it will be a long haul. At the time, Pelosi would not discuss her political plans but would only disclose that the attack on her husband would affect her decision.

Historians have noted that other consequential political figures had careers later as rank-and-file members of Congress, including John Quincy Adams, the former president, who went on to serve for nearly 18 years in Congress. □

IRS contractor gets more scrutiny in congressional report

By **FATIMA HUSSEIN**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

House investigators reported Thursday that a federal contractor that provided identity verification services for the Internal Revenue Service exaggerated the amount of money being lost to pandemic fraud in an apparent attempt to increase demand for its product and that it also overstated its capacity to provide services.

The investigation of ID.me, which uses facial recognition to verify identities in some cases, was launched in April after critics of the software company said it could be a target of cyberthreats and presented privacy concerns. Other advocates were critical of a private company taking on what should be a core government task of verifying people's identities to receive benefits.

The report found that in 14 states that contracted with ID.me for identity verification services including California, Texas, and Florida wait times for ID.me video chats reached an average



The exterior of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) building in Washington, on March 22, 2013.

Associated Press

of more than four hours, though the firm claimed it answered calls in far less time, potentially delaying pandemic relief funds to millions of Americans.

The report said ID.me asserted that there were significantly higher levels of pandemic fraud compared to other assessments that were based on expert analysis in an apparent effort to boost interest in its

services.

The committees cited ID.me CEO Blake Hall's assertion that "America has lost more than \$400 billion to fraudulent claims," though the Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General has identified \$45.7 billion in potential unemployment fraud.

Terry Neal, a spokesperson for ID.me, said "calling ID.me's estimate too high

or baseless is premature and we welcome additional oversight on this important matter."

Neal pointed to statements from officials in five states, including California, that credit ID.me with helping to prevent billions in fraud.

The report was commissioned by the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis and the Committee on Oversight

and Reform after privacy advocates and lawmakers made calls for the company to be investigated.

"It is deeply disappointing that a company that received tens of millions in taxpayer dollars to help Americans obtain these benefits may have hurt their ability to access that critical relief," said Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-S.C., who chairs the coronavirus crisis subcommittee.

Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., who chairs the oversight committee, said she was "deeply concerned about ID.me providing inaccurate information to federal agencies in order to be awarded millions of dollars in contracts."

"Excluding specific episodes, wait times have generally been below 30 minutes as they are today," Neal said.

Earlier this year, the IRS announced it would suspend its use of ID.me's facial recognition technology to authenticate people who create online accounts after the practice was criticized by privacy advocates and lawmakers. □

U.S. agent, suspected smuggler killed off Puerto Rico coast

By **MIKE BALSAMO and JOSHUA GOODMAN**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

A U.S. Customs and Border Protection agent and a suspected smuggler died during a shootout Thursday off the Puerto Rico coast, authorities said. Other U.S. officers were injured.

CBP's Air and Marine Operations unit was on routine patrol when the shots were fired about 12 miles (19 kilometers) off the coast from Cabo Rojo, a major drug smuggling corridor for cocaine coming out of South America known as the Mona Passage. It lies between Puerto Rico's western coastline and the Dominican Republic.

One of two suspected smugglers died, said CBP spokesman Jeffrey Quiñones.

The FBI is leading the investigation into the shooting, which occurred around 8 a.m. local time, Quiñones told reporters in Puerto Rico. He said it was too early to know where the vessel originated from, the nationality of its two passengers and whether it was carrying narcotics or servicing another suspected drug vessel in the Caribbean.

Typically, drug cartels recruit poor fishermen from Colombia and Venezuela to transport large amounts of cocaine northward to the Dominican Republic where it is broken down into smaller bales and transferred at sea to waiting vessels manned by better-paid, sometimes well-armed Puerto Rican drug runners. CBP said in a statement that three agents were injured and were be-

ing airlifted to the Puerto Rico Trauma Center. That initial statement did not indicate anyone was killed. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in testimony before a Senate committee that an Air and Marine Operations agent was killed and several other agents were "gravely wounded."

"These are brave members of our Air and Marine Operations within U.S. Customs and Border Protection," Mayorkas said. "So the difficulty of this job cannot be compared to the difficulty that our frontline personnel face every day. Their bravery and selfless service should be recognized."

Air and Marine Operations employs about 1,650 people and is one of the smaller units of CBP, the largest law enforcement agency in

the United States that also includes the Border Patrol. Air and Marine aircraft and sea assets to stop the illegal movement of people, drugs and other goods.

The unit detected 218 "conventional aircraft in-

cursions" on U.S. soil in the 2021 fiscal year, seized 1.1 million pounds of narcotics, \$73.1 million in illicit currency, made more than 122,000 arrests and rescued 518 people, according to CBP. □



Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas speaks during a House Homeland Security Committee hearing on "Worldwide Threats to the Homeland", at the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2022.

Associated Press

Starbucks workers strike at more than 100 U.S. stores

By **DEE-ANN DURBIN**
AP Business Writer

Starbucks workers at more than 100 U.S. stores are on strike Thursday in their largest labor action since a campaign to unionize the company's stores began late last year.

The walkouts coincide with Starbucks' annual Red Cup Day, when the company gives free reusable cups to customers who order a holiday drink. Workers say it's often one of the busiest days of the year. Starbucks declined to say how many red cups it plans to distribute.

Workers say they're seeking better pay, more consistent schedules and higher staffing levels in busy stores. Stores in 25 states planned to take part in the labor action, according to Starbucks Workers United, the group organizing the effort. Strikers are handing out their own red cups with union logos.

Starbucks, which opposes the unionization effort, said it is aware of the walkouts and respects its employees' right to lawfully protest. The Seattle company noted that the protests are happening at a small number of its 9,000 company-



People chant and hold signs in front of a Starbucks in New York, Thursday, Nov. 17, 2022.

Associated Press

run U.S. locations.

"We remain committed to all partners and will continue to work together, side-by-side, to make Starbucks a company that works for everyone," the company said Thursday in a statement.

Some workers planned to picket all day while others will do shorter walkouts. The union said the goal is to shut stores down during the strikes, and noted that the

company usually has difficulty staffing during Red Cup Day because it's so busy.

Silvia Baldwin, 26 and Tzvi Ortiz, 31, said they love being baristas at the 34th Street and Chestnut Street Starbucks in Philadelphia. But the work has gotten harder, with the understaffed store trying to fill delivery orders and in-person orders simultaneously.

"It's just not viable. It's very

stressful," Ortiz said.

"And a lot of people don't really notice, like, the humans behind this assembly."

Baldwin, who is on the store's bargaining committee, is also frustrated that the union hasn't been able to bargain with Starbucks. Striking on Starbucks' busiest day felt inspiring and it will "be impossible to ignore," she said.

Others, including Michelle

Eisen, a union organizer at one of the first stores to organize in Buffalo, New York, said workers are angry that Starbucks promised higher pay and benefits to non-union stores. Starbucks says it is following the law and can't give union stores pay hikes without bargaining.

The labor action also attracted some supporters. Greg Windle, a member of the Philadelphia chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America, said he showed at the strike at 8 a.m. to support his friends who work at Starbucks.

Starbucks and the union have begun contract talks at 53 stores, with 13 additional sessions scheduled, Starbucks Workers United said. No agreements have been reached so far.

The process has been contentious. Earlier this week, a regional director with the NLRB filed a request for an injunction against Starbucks in federal court, saying the company violated labor law when it fired a union organizer in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The regional director asked the court to direct Starbucks to reinstate the employee and stop interfering in the unionization campaign nationwide. □

Obama to announce expansion of young leaders program to US

By **DARLENE SUPERVILLE**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An Obama Foundation program that has trained hundreds of young leaders across Africa, the Asia-

Pacific and Europe is being expanded to include the United States.

Former President Barack Obama is expected to announce the new program on Thursday during a two-

day democracy forum the foundation is co-sponsoring in New York City.

The Obama Foundation Leaders United States program is a six-month leadership development program for emerging leaders between the ages of 24 and 45. The program will serve more than 100 leaders from the U.S. in its first year. Participants will be chosen through a competitive application process.

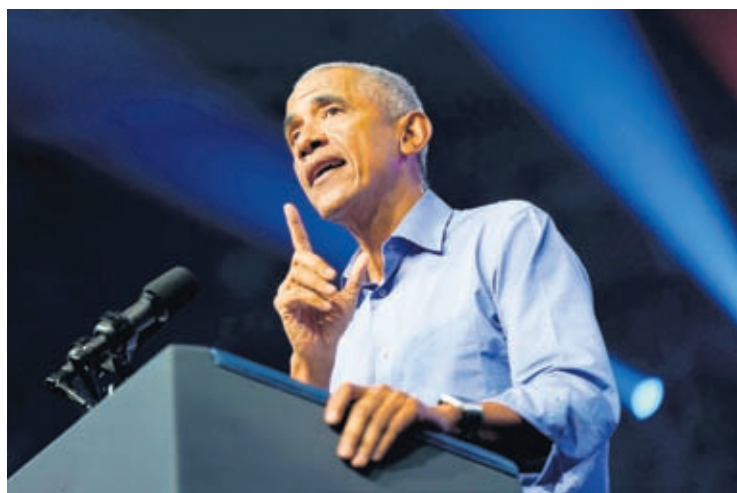
In remarks prepared for delivery on Thursday at the forum, Obama cites "consistently high interest" in the foundation's programs as a reason for the expansion.

"The creativity, determination and passion of these leaders are already making an impact in lives saved,

environments restored, children educated," he says. "They're creating new models for clean energy generation and poverty alleviation. It's remarkable and inspiring and a little humbling, since I sure wasn't making such an impact at their age. "And the good news is, we're just scratching the surface of what this next generation is capable of," Obama says. The Obama Foundation Leaders program has worked with more than 700 people in Africa, the Asia-Pacific and Europe since it was launched in 2018 after Obama, a Democrat, left the White House following two terms as president, according to the foundation. Valerie Jarrett, a longtime

Obama adviser and CEO of the Obama Foundation, said the U.S. extension of the leaders program is a "continuation of our efforts to pay it forward by helping the next generation."

The foundation, in partnership with Columbia University and the University of Chicago, is holding its first democracy forum in New York on Thursday and Friday. Democracy thinkers, leaders and activists from across the globe will discuss how to advance and strengthen democracy in the United States and abroad. Obama is scheduled to close the first day of the forum with a speech and a conversation with a group of foundation leaders. □



Former President Barack Obama speaks at a campaign rally Nov. 5, 2022, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

Spanish minister accuses judges of 'machismo,' faces uproar

By CIARÁN GILES and
JOSEPH WILSON

Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Spain's magistrate associations and main opposition party called Thursday for the country's equality minister to resign after she accused judges of "machismo" for reducing prison sentences under a new sexual aggression law that was never intended to have that effect.

The "sexual liberty" law made sexual consent, or a lack of it, a key determinant in assault cases and revised the range of potential minimum and maximum prison terms, inadvertently making it possible for some convicted individuals to have their sentences reduced on appeal.

The legislation, popularly known as the "Only yes means yes" law, came into force last month. Now, one of Equality Minister Irene Montero's signature projects is threatening to prove politically damaging.

Revelations this week of the reduced sentences in at least 15 cases outraged the minister and supporters of the law, who argued that Spain's judges needed more training to overcome



Spain's Equality Minister Irene Montero speaks with journalists in Madrid, Spain, Wednesday Nov. 16, 2022.

Associated Press

ingrained gender biases. Montero accused some judges of not obeying the law, adding that the United Nations has said systematic sexism can lead jurists to misinterpret laws.

"The problem is that we have judges who are not upholding the law," she said, arguing that sexist stereotypes blind some judges to seeing gender violence for the crime it is.

Judges who reduced sex

crime sentences argue they were required to rule in the favor of defendants if the laws under which they were originally convicted have the potential penalties changed.

In one case, a Madrid court recently lowered the sentence of a man convicted of sexually abusing his 13-year-old stepdaughter from eight to six years.

In another, a court in southern Granada took two

years off a 13-year sentence given to a man who threatened his ex-wife with a knife and raped her.

Opposition parties and magistrate groups were infuriated by Montero's remarks and blame the left-wing government and its backers in Parliament for passing a poorly drafted law. Two magistrate groups and the conservative Popular Party called for Montero to step down.

Ángeles Carmona, member of Spain's General Council of the Judiciary and president of its Observatory of Gender and Domestic Violence, noted that more than half of Spain's judges are women and that all are required to undergo special training in gender violence.

Carmona said that her observatory had warned lawmakers of flaws in the writing of the sexual consent legislation and that Montero's criticism of judges risked undermining women's trust in the justice system. "We had already issued a warning in our report that what is happening could take place," Carmona said.

"(But) the justice system is not sexist; it is not part of the patriarchy. The judges are applying the law in impeccable fashion."

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez appealed for calm and urged the judiciary to reach a consensus on how such case appeals are handled.

The new gender violence legislation was drawn up in response to the furor sparked by a gang-rape case during the 2016 San Fermin bull-running festival in Pamplona. □

Despite U.N. efforts, quick Cyprus peace talks restart bleak

By MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS
Associated Press

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — The foreign minister of ethnically divided Cyprus offered a bleak outlook Thursday for resuming stalled peace talks any time soon even though a senior United Nations official affirmed the commitment of the world body's chief to remain engaged in resolving one of Europe's most intractable conflicts.

Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides said the Cypriot government hopes the chances of restarting the talks do not "get any worse" over the next few months due to the actions of Turkey and breakaway Turkish Cypriots.

Greece and Cyprus have accused Turkish President

Recep Tayyip Erdogan of engaging in hostile rhetoric and behavior in an effort to rally nationalist supporters ahead of Turkey's presidential election in April.

Kasoulides also cast doubt on the possibility of renewed talks facing better chances after the election. The minister spoke after the U.N.'s assistant secretary-general for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, Miroslav Jenča, met with Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades to scope out the chances for renewed negotiations. Jenča was scheduled to meet later Thursday with Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar.

"I just would like to underline the commitment of the secretary-general to stay engaged in the process

searching for common ground and finding understanding to move forward the issue of settlement," Jenča said.

Cyprus divided into ethnically Greek and ethnically Turkish sides in 1974, when Turkey invaded following a coup by supporters of union with Greece.

The government of Cyprus has strongly protested a bid by Turkey to earn recognition during an Organization of Turkic States summit this week for the breakaway Turkish Cypriot state in the island nation's north.

The government also has objected to what it said were numerous military encroachments along the 180-kilometer-long (112-mile-long) U.N.-controlled buffer zone that splits

the breakaway north from southern Cyprus, where the internationally recognized government is seated.

"I say (Turkey and the Turk-

ish Cypriots) won't succeed in any of those aims and they haven't, despite all the Turkish propaganda," Kasoulides said. □



UN Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas Miroslav Jenča, right, Cyprus' President Nicos Anastasiades, left, and Cyprus' Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides, rear left, talk during their meeting at the Presidential palace in the divided capital, Nicosia, Cyprus, Thursday, Nov. 17, 2022.

Associated Press

After exchange, China calls Canada's manner 'condescending'

BEIJING (AP) — A Chinese spokesperson on Thursday accused Canada of acting in a "condescending manner" following a testy exchange between President Xi Jinping and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that underscores the depths to which the bilateral relationship has fallen. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning's comments came after Xi chastised Trudeau at the G-20 summit on Wednesday over media reports on an earlier meeting during which Trudeau expressed concern about Chinese interference in Canada's internal affairs. The apparently spontaneous exchange with a translator present was captured on video. Mao denied China had ever interfered in the internal affairs of other nations and said Canada was responsible for the downturn in ties. "Canada should take concrete actions to create conditions for the improvement of China-Canada relations," she said at a daily briefing. The conversation was "quite normal and should not be interpreted as President Xi criticizing or blaming anyone."



Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping after taking part in the closing session at the G20 Leaders Summit in Bali, Indonesia on Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2022. Associated Press

Mao added that there had been a clear lack of respect from the Canadian side. "China has no problem at all with having a candid dialogue with other countries," she said. "But we hope such a candid dialogue will be based on equal treatment and mutual respect, rather than criticizing the other in a condescending manner." In his comments

to Trudeau, Xi said, "Everything we discussed has been leaked to the paper; that's not appropriate." "And that's not ... the way the conversation was conducted, if there is sincerity on your part," Xi said, at which point Trudeau interrupted and stepped toward Xi. "In Canada, we believe in free and open and frank dialogue and that is what we will continue to have," Trudeau said.

"We will continue to look to work constructively together, but there will be things we will disagree on." "Let's create the conditions first," Xi responded. The two shook hands after the brief encounter. Mao said nothing Xi said should be interpreted as a threat. "As you can see from the video, I think it is quite normal for the two

heads of state to have a brief conversation during the G-20 summit. The two sides were just stating their respective positions," she said. Trudeau first spoke with Xi at the G-20 last Tuesday. A senior Canadian government official said the two spoke about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, North Korea and climate change, and that Trudeau also raised "our serious concerns around interference activities in Canada." The official spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak publicly about the matter. Asked later at a news conference about the confrontation, Trudeau said, "not every conversation is always going to be easy, but it's extremely important that we continue to stand up for the things that are important for Canadians." Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly also said she discussed Chinese interference with her Chinese counterpart at the G-20. Joly remarked last week that China is an increasingly disruptive global power and warned businesses against deepening their ties, saying there were "geopolitical risks." □



This image provided by the Italian State Police on Thursday, Nov. 17, 2022, shows searches as part of an investigation that led to the issue of 18 arrest warrants for Italians and Tunisians, in Sicily on Thursday, accused of operating a migrant trafficking route on high-speed boats from Sicilian ports to the Tunisians coast.

Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — Italian police arrested 12 people Thursday and have issued warrants for another six over their alleged roles in a high-speed migrant-smuggling ring that operated between Tunisia and Sicily.

The suspects are alleged to have demanded payment of 3,000-5,000 euros (\$3,100-\$5,200) in cash per person, packed the boats with 10 to 30 passengers at a time, and pocketed 30,000-70,000 euros for

Italy arrests 12 in high-speed migrant smuggling ring

each four-hour journey, police said in a statement. Phone intercepts revealed that the smugglers discussed dumping migrants overboard in the case of problems such as failed motors, police said. The investigation was launched in February 2019 after a fisherman in Sicily's port of Gela noticed a 10-meter glass fiber boat with two 200-horsepower motors. Investigators discovered the boat had been stolen 10 days previously in Catania, Sicily. Arrest warrants were issued for 11 Tunisians and seven Italians. They face charges of illegal cross-border smuggling of more than five people, with

the aggravating circumstance of inhuman treatment and endangering the lives of migrants and committing crimes for profit. A Tunisian couple already jailed on a people-trafficking conviction were identified as the presumed masterminds of the scheme. Two Tunisians based in Sicily were accused of having managed the money, while five Italians allegedly organized housing and transfer of the smugglers to and from ports. Profits were reinvested into the operation, including the purchase of new boats, to increase earnings. The warrants also target four other alleged speed-boat drivers, one Italian

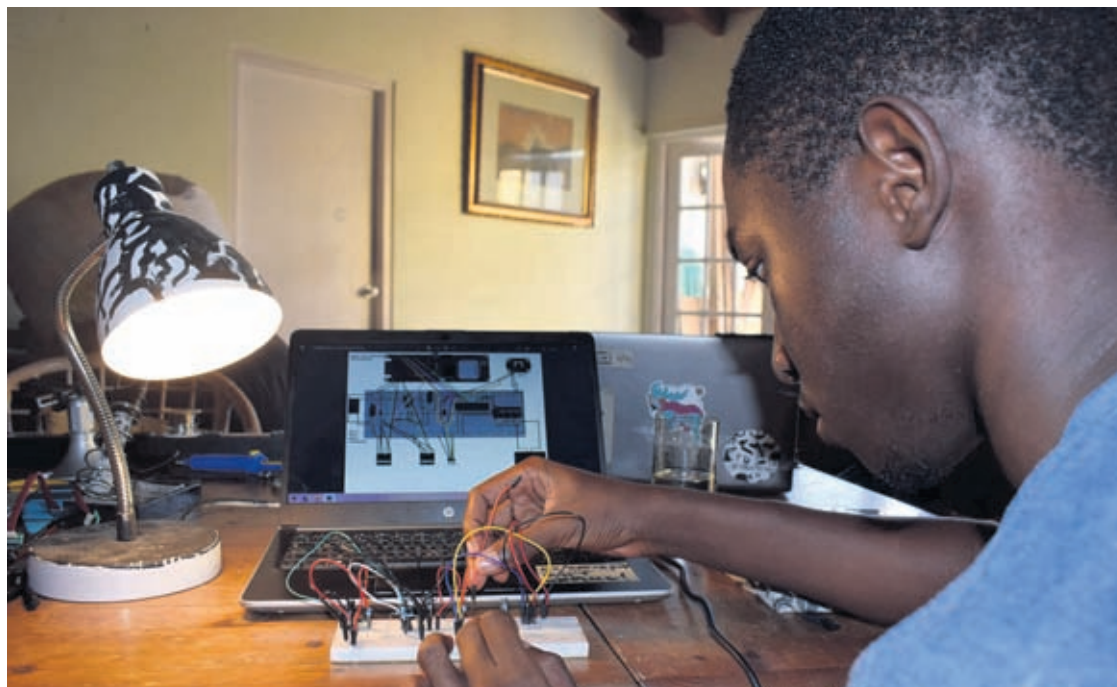
and three Tunisians, and four Tunisians who made connections with the migrants in northern Africa. Also suspected in the ring is owner of a small farm with a private airfield that allegedly functioned as a base for the operation. The farmer was accused of providing employment documents for some of the Tunisian operatives to legitimize their presence in Italy. While the new Italian government has cracked down on humanitarian rescue ships that pick up migrants departing Libya in the central Mediterranean Sea, the majority of migrants arriving in Italy travel along routes from Tunisia. □

Metabolic Foundation testing air quality sensor

ORANJESTAD – Recently, the Metabolic Foundation had a replication session of their air quality sensor "the first airbender", in connection with their Surfside Science project.

"If all goes well, they will replicate this and we'll have our 2nd airbender", the organizers commented on a post on their Facebook Page. "Our good friend of the foundation Jeff and our new intern Steven studying at the University of Aruba are working on it."

"One of our main goals is to make all our environment monitoring methods replicable and affordable. This way we want to stimulate any other islands that also have a lack of data to start to collect their data as well. So everything we develop



and collect will be open source", they said.

Back in August, Metabolic Foundation announced its Surfside Science project, which focuses on methods for measuring the quality of

air and sea water, changes in the coast landscape and vegetation in the bottom of the ocean. Surfside Science is a project that received financing from RESEMBID, which is a fund of the European Union managed by Expertise France, the collaboration agency for French development that manages projects in the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT), which include Aruba and 11 other islands in the Caribbean.

The Surfside Science project will have duration of one year, and during that year, Metabolic Foundation will test different methods that can be used to automate

data collection on Aruba's coasts, both on land and in the ocean itself, close to the coast. Mettes indicated that these methods are more affordable than traditional method, and the

foundation tries to make them more applicable in order that they can also be used by people who are not scientists themselves.

To guarantee that the methods are trustworthy, throughout the year the foundation will be working together with marine ecologist and environmental engineer Tatiana Becker, who will compare the results that Metabolic Foundation measures with the results that she will measure using standard methods generally used in science. With this, the foundation hopes to prove that their methods can be applied on more beaches around Aruba.

For more information, please visit science.brenchies.com. □



MoU zero-emission vehicles

ORANJESTAD – The Government of Aruba, through the ministry of Nature and the ministry of Economic Affairs, signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding their focus so that by 2030, 30 percent of all vehicles medium duty and heavy duty in our country are zero-emission vehicles.

This initiative is led by the Dutch government and also CALSTART with its Global Commercial Vehicle Drive to Zero program.

The objective is to accelerate the zero-emission market, especially in the industry of medium and heavy duty vehicles. This way an

additional step is also taken to stimulate more sustainable practices in Aruba.

As inhabitants of a small and arid island, the people of Aruba are aware of the impact of climate change in our daily life and future. Even so, we construct our community by dealing with our vulnerabilities and by establishing high ambitions and even higher standards, according to a press release.

Aruba has shown that it contributes to a collective impact when it comes to modernization and adaptation to sustainable practices, and the benefit is to



all who adopt these in their countries. Aruba also continues leading the trend in the region in different as-

pects, like tourism for example, but also sustainability.

With this initiative, the MOU

fortifies Aruba's commitment to a more sustainable future. □

Successful DCCA - 1st International Sustainable Air Transportation Event

After the community event held on November 11, 2022, at the Southside General Aviation Hangar, the Dutch Caribbean Cooperation of Airports (DCCA), a cooperation between all 6 Caribbean Airports within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, can look back on a successful 1st International Sustainable Air Transportation Event - A Flight to the Future.

The keynote speech, speakers, presentations, panel discussions, and masterclasses at the event were of immense value to the continued efforts of all the airports involved to venture into sustainable air transportation developments, solutions, and technologies. These endeavors support one of their main

goals, sustainably improving inter-island connectivity.

"The knowledge and insights gained during the event will further strengthen our efforts as Dutch Caribbean Cooperation of Airports to be innovative front runners on electric flying in the Caribbean region and making interisland air connections more sustainable, efficient, and affordable for the Dutch Caribbean communities. This will in turn further enhance the societies of the island nations considering the sustainable development goals of all", said Joost Meijs, CEO of Aruba Airport Authority N.V. and DCCA Chairman on behalf of DCCA.

311 participants attended



the in-person conference throughout the week, and 888 virtually. The commu-

nity also came out in large numbers to view the Pipistrel Velis Electro and learn more about its capabilities and technology.

As one of the accomplishments, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed during the event between all four countries (Aruba, St Maarten, Curaçao, and The Netherlands) of the Dutch Kingdom, six airports of the Dutch Caribbean and the Dutch Association of Airports (NVL). In this Memorandum of Understanding, all signatories have expressed their commitment to improving interisland connectivity by making it more affordable, efficient, and sustainable.

As a result of this MOU, the parties will form a steering committee and workgroup

working on a Joint Business Plan describing how to achieve it and which hurdles to eliminate. They will deliver this business plan within seven months from the day of the signing of this MOU.

On behalf of DCCA, chairman Mr. Joost Meijs sincerely thanks all contributors, participants, and support staff for making this event possible and a grand success. A heartfelt thank you is also in place for all the speakers, panelists, moderators, stakeholders, and volunteers that participated in getting this event off the ground and completed.

For more information on the conference, visit DCCA's website at www.dccairports.com.





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Successful Edition of the Big Live Nature Quiz Kids

Kralendijk, Bonaire- 17th of November 2022- The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) just hosted the Big Live Nature Quiz for young people, aged 12-14, living on Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Maarten, and Sint Eustatius. With 134 participating teams (consisting of 1 to 4 kids per team) competing from across the six Dutch Caribbean islands, the event was a great opportunity to bring nature into the classrooms. After many exciting and thrilling nature question rounds, a team on Sint Maarten won.

Multi-island effort

The Big Live Nature Quiz- kids edition is a live online nature trivia game hosted by DCNA and played in high schools across the Dutch Caribbean. The quiz is a true multi-island team effort: created and supported by the six Dutch Caribbean islands including the nature conservation organizations (parks), high schools, (local) sponsors, and Dutch Caribbean TV. The quiz questions were made available in 4 languages: English, Dutch, Papiamentu, and Papiamentu. Due to the extreme weather and school closures on some of the islands, the quiz was postponed for a week, to November 15th.

Winners

There were 134 teams competing. The

first-place team, 'Kenatra Palarchie', won a sailing and snorkeling trip around Sint Maarten, on which we are sure they will treat their fellow sailors with lots of interesting trivia facts about the marine life they see. Also, several local prizes were available for the island winners. The highest scoring team was 'Lions' for Bonaire, '4x4' for Curaçao, 'Perros' for Saba, 'Fun-tastic four' for St Eustatius, and 'Kenatra Palarchie' for St Maarten. DCNA would like to congratulate all the teams on their impressive trivia knowledge!

Endangered Species

This year's quiz included questions about the endangered animals and plants within the Dutch Caribbean. From rare flowers to burrowing owls, this quiz covered a whole host of island inhabitants, showcasing the unique and extraordinary wildlife across the islands.

Yearly Free Event for Adults and youth

The Big Live Nature Quiz is created to teach citizens about nature in a fun and interactive way, to instill pride in the islands' wildlife, support nature-friendly practices, support the projects of the nature parks, and to bring people in the Dutch Caribbean into contact with each other. This is a free annual event for adults and youth since 2020. □



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Travellers' Choice 2020

Aruba wins singles championship in the Aruba Open Beach Tennis Championships 2022



Hometown hero Aksel Samardzic wins the singles title in the highest level of play against Spain's Antomi Ramos who is the number 1 ranked player on the PBT ranking.

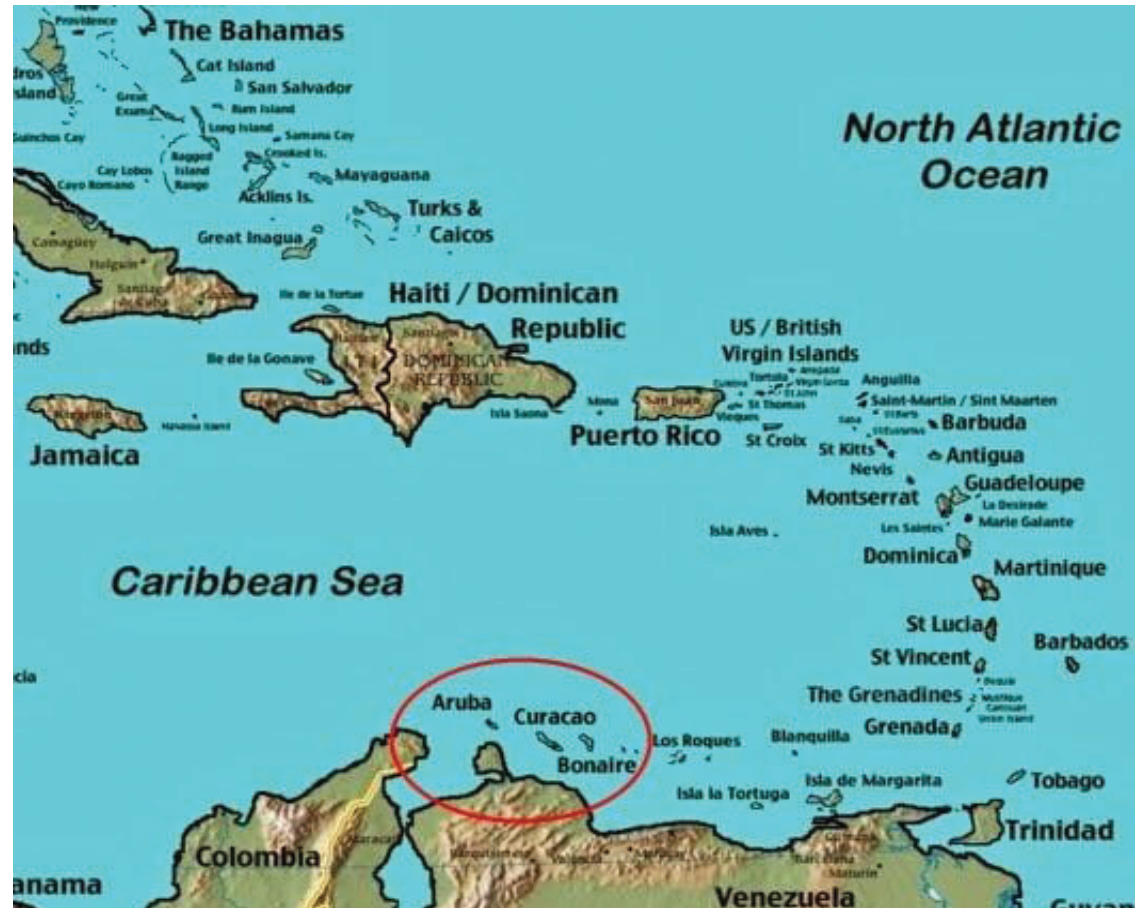
On Wednesday, November 16 at Bushiri Beach's Center Court, the crowd at Aruba Open Beach Tennis Championship rallied

behind Aksel who plays for Aruba. There was not one empty seat in the entire stadium.

Aksel took home \$1000 in prize money along with serious bragging rights.

Congratulations to Aksel and to Aruba. A massive victory. ☐

Origin of Papiamentu- Aruba's native language



ORANJESTAD — Papiamentu, Creole language of ABC (Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao) is from the Cape Verdean Creole family (Cape Verdean language) and was taken to the Caribbean in the 9th century by the Cape Verdeans of that time (linings and slaves), experts in cane culture and sugar production, and who were hired by Jewish entrepreneurs who went to invest in this business in the Caribbean.

Cape Verdeans taught this pre-industrial revolution technology (planting cane and producing sugar, which they had learned from Madeirans) to slaves from other African regions, and did so in their language, Cape Verde Creole (Cape Verdean language), hence the language implanted in Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao.

Unlike many interesting stories, wanting to link Papiamentu directly to Portuguese, Galician or Castilian (see Papiamentu, on Wikipedia - Portuguese version and Spanish version, where the Portuguese and Spanish, each claim the direct origin of Papiamentu), in fact, this is not true. Papiamentu is not direct from Portuguese, Galician or Castilian, it is from the Cape Verde Creole family (Cape Verdean language). You can see this best when it's saying obscene words and offending someone, precisely as they say today in both ABC and Cape Verde islands. The obscene words kept the original, had no lexical influence either from Castilian or Dutch.

Also the PapiCristang of Malacca, the Patuá of Macau, and several creoles from the east (from Daman, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Philippines, Indonesia) and Africa (Casamança, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, these last two releases to

the English), all originated in the Creole of Cabo Verde (Cape Verdean language), which was the French language spoken in Portuguese feitorias on the coast of Africa (from Senegal to Sierra Leone), and which was taken east by the thousands of cable - Verdeans (linings and slaves, already Christianized and speaking Creole) who served as sailors and "slaves of arms" in Portuguese caravels, demanding the east. I don't know why the official history of Portugal usually omits this fact, which is in the chronicles of the quinrentist chroniclers, but which we never saw in the history of Portugal that we study from primary education to higher education.

However, it has always been tried to deceive us, in colonial time, that we were descendants of Viriato (Iberian hero in the fight against the Romans) and the pastors of the Hermini Mountains, but not much speaking of our black-African ancestry.

We Cape Verdeans understand each other very well with these Antillans and Easterns, whose language is from the same Creole family of Cape Verde (Cape Verdean language), speaking their Creole and we ours. Therefore, Papiamentu, PapiCristang, PatuáMacaense and the creoles, said of Portuguese origin, Daman, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, some locations in the Philippines and some places in Indonesia, are creoles of the language family Cape Verde Creole (Cape Verdean language) and indirectly the Galaico-Duriense or Galaico-Portuguese, a language that the people spoke in Portugal in the 6th and 7th century.

**Anonymous
Source: Dushi Aruba**

Business owners united to reinvent Downtown Oranjestad Downtown Food & Art Festival will take place in Weststraat

ORANJESTAD – Last Wednesday the Reinvented Downtown project was launched, initiated by Impact Hub Aruba together with various business owners in the area of Weststraat who share a single goal, to give life back to the area of Downtown Oranjestad.

Mrs. Mary-Ann Falconi-Rasmijn, General Manager of Impact Hub Aruba explained that Impact Hub as an incubator organization and coworking space firmly believes in projects to benefit the business community, to promote economic development and most importantly to benefit our local community. Recently they formed a commission of building owners in Weststraat to reinvest in their properties and give a new experience to attract commerce and housing back to the area.

Reinvented Downtown

Regarding the project "Downtown Reinventa" – Reinvented Downtown – the commission is launching a Downtown Food & Art Festival on the 30th of November where the community can come enjoy art exhibitions and mural art starting at 3pm. From 6-11pm there will be selling of crafts, pop-up stores, local cuisine and food trucks. There will be entertainment for kids by Disney Recreation. There will also be entertainment by DJ Calero, Rumba Caribeña Gaita y Show, and Grupo di Betico. At exactly 8.50pm there will be a fireworks show to celebrate the beginning of a new era for Downtown Oranjestad.

Mrs. Falconi-Rasmijn said that the commission is aware that this is a long-term project and will demand dedication and consistency to achieve the common vision as well



as the commitment of all those involved to continue with the collaboration. Downtown Oranjestad consists of many more areas than just Weststraat and Schoenerhaven, each one with its own identity. However, the commission took the area of Schoenerhaven, Weststraat and Werfstraat as the areas to start with a pilot project. The primordial intention is that other owners in other areas of Oranjestad can continue with the framework and apply this so that other areas can be reinvented.

Mrs. Falconi-Rasmijn thanks all stakeholders, partners and partic-

ularly business owners in the area:

Mr. Richard Eman, Mr. Alberto Perret, Mr. Milton Harms, Mr. Irwin Perret, Mr. Jaime Gomez, Mr. Dinesh Mahtani, Mr. Krish Mahtani, Mr. Jean Carlos Espinal, Mr. Demis Illes, Mr. Paul Gielen, Mr. Teddy Bouroncle, Mr. Mark Benson Denz and Mr. Richard Lacle and everyone who contributed one way or the other. She also thanked sponsors Aruba Tourism Authority, Harbourwalk, Elite Productions, Romar Trading, PANA, Aruba Ports Authority, Sherwin Williams, Disney Recreation and Events.

Mrs. Ronella Croes, CEO of Aruba Tourism Authority was also present during the press conference as one of the main sponsors, and elaborated on ATA's vision for the experience that is offered to the cruise tourist who is searching for an authentic experience combined with culture, history and our people. This project is focused precisely on the cruise area to make it more attractive and create added value for the cruise tourist. Mrs. Croes elaborated on similar events that were organized in the past headed by ATA that generated a unique experience for Oranjestad, and it is expected that Downtown Food & Art Festival will achieve the same results.

The curator of the Downtown Food & Art Festival is Mr. Ricardo "Cado" De Lannoy, who is in charge of investigating the history of Paardenbaai and Playa, as well as leading the artistic aspect of the project and the concepts of each mural creation, maintaining the essence of the culture and history of the area.

President of the Association Welcome Plaza, Mrs. Elizabeth Guanipa gave a speech sharing their experience as owners of the kiosks at Welcome Plaza and the ambition to attract local consumers. Mrs. Guanipa also explained their desire to receive the flow of tourists from the High Rise area to come closer to Oranjestad to know the beauty that Oranjestad has to offer. Mrs. Guanipa said she is glad to be part of this initiative and during next week, they will unveil more about their participation.

Finalizing, Mrs. Falconi-Rasmijn invited the community of Aruba to meet a new Weststraat on the 30th of November in a family atmosphere and to enjoy our local groups as well as a beautiful fireworks show. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 43 Spook

1 Iron output

6 Wrong

11 Nick of "Cape Fear"

12 Dame Judi

13 Provinces

14 Alma —

15 Snap

16 Chisholm Trail end

18 Worker in a colony

19 Polite address

20 Cardinal

21 Matador's foe

23 Shore fliers

25 Schedule C org.

27 Sailing site

28 Fife fellows

30 Level

33 Summer sign

34 Dawn goddess

36 Mine yield

37 Sincere

39 Guitarist Wood

40 Brat's opposite

41 Have a spat

DOWN

1 Be short with

2 2006

Winter

Games setting

3 Hymn player,

perhaps

4 One-time connection

5 Buttes' kin

6 Looks up to



Yesterday's answer

7 Diner

buy

8 Heart,

e.g.

9 Play parts

10 Tatter

22 Spanish gold

24 Game caller

26 Pittsburgh pro

28 Spooky gathering

29 Urgent call

31 In the area

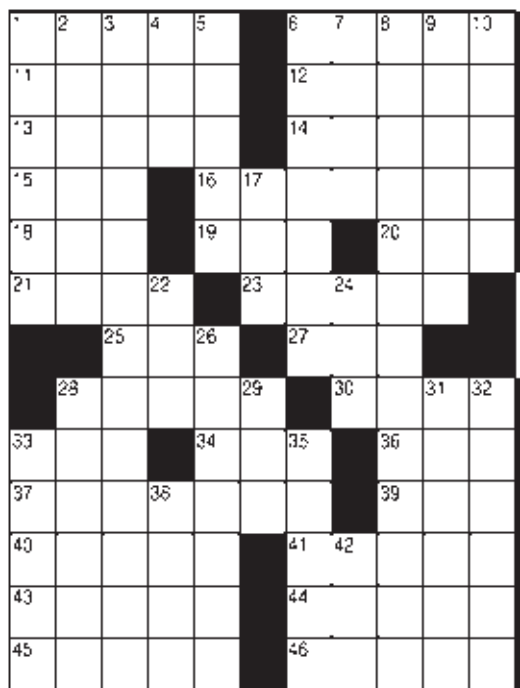
32 Principles

33 Minimum amount

35 Mailing need

38 Notorious emperor

42 Old auto



11-18

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

11-18

CRYPTOQUOTE

ZO LDW KEJF LDWQ PRZBYQNJ FD TN
ZJFNBBZMNJF, QNEY FRNV OEZQL
FEBNI, ZO LDW KEJF FRNV FD TN
VDQN ZJFNBBZMNJF, QNEY FRNV VDQN

OEZQL FEBNI, — EBTNQF NZJIFNZJ
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: NOBODY MADE A
GREATER MISTAKE THAN HE WHO DID NOTHING
BECAUSE HE COULD DO ONLY A LITTLE. —
EDMUND BURKE

Consumer groups want grocers to ditch digital-only deals

By DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Business Writer

A coalition of consumer groups is asking grocery chains to rethink their digital-only coupons, saying the deals discriminate against people who don't have smartphones or reliable internet access. Digital-only deals advertised online or on store shelves can offer significant savings, but they generally require customers to electronically clip a coupon in a grocer's app or on its website. For example, a Kroger in Cincinnati, Ohio, is advertising frozen turkey for 60 cents per pound this week; with a digital coupon, the price drops to 49 cents per pound. And a Stop & Shop in Somerville, Massachusetts, is offering a half pork loin for \$2.99 per pound; with a digital coupon, that drops to \$1.79 per pound. "There's nothing wrong with digital coupons as long as they're eq-

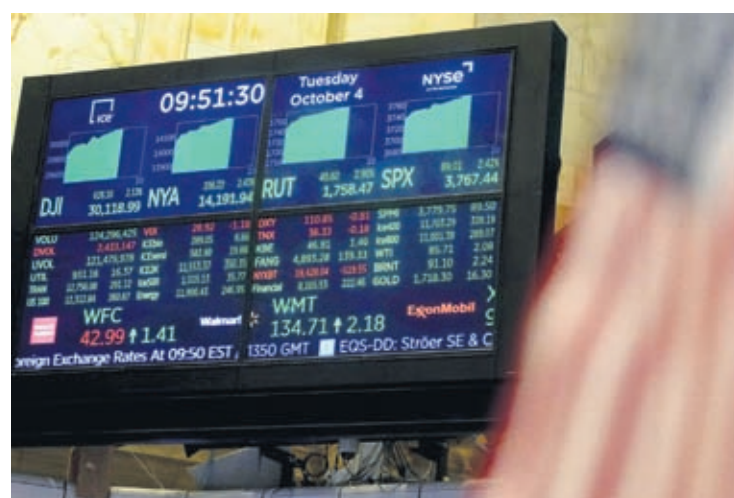


A digital-only coupon for Pampers brand baby wipes is displayed at a Kroger in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2022. Associated Press

uitable and everyone can take advantage of the advertised price in one way or another," said Edgar Dworsky, a consumer advocate and former assistant attorney general in Massachusetts who runs the website Consumer World. Dworsky and others including Consumer Reports, Consumer Action, the Public Interest Research Group

and the National Consumers League sent letters this week to Kroger, Albertsons, Stop & Shop and Smart & Final urging them to make sure deals are available in both digital and non-digital formats. Kroger and Smart & Final didn't respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press. Stop & Shop said it will review the letter. □

Trimming the fat: inflation finally hitting profit margins



A display shows most indices up on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange in New York, Tuesday, Oct. 4, 2022. Associated Press

By STAN CHOE
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Corporate profits have withstood raging inflation over much of the last year, but those good times may be ending. Profits stayed fat even as companies' costs rose thanks to one simple trick: Businesses boosted the prices they charged customers by more than their own costs rose.

Now, though, more companies are seeing their costs rise faster than their revenues. In the parlance of finance executives, their margins are getting squeezed, and that's acting as a drag on their profits. To be sure, corporate profits are still near record highs. Companies in the S&P 500 are in the midst of reporting overall growth of roughly 2% for the summer from a year earlier. □

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24/7

U.S. home births rise in pandemic, to highest level in decades

By **LINDSEY TANNER**
AP Medical Writer

U.S. home births increased slightly in the pandemic's second year, rising to the highest level in decades, according to a government report published Thursday.

Among almost 4 million births in 2021, nearly 52,000 occurred at home, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report showed. That's up about 12% from 2020, following a 22% rise from 2019 to 2020. Increases were seen across races and ethnicities, although home births were much less common among Hispanic women than others.

Elizabeth Gregory, the report's lead author, said reasons for the increases are unknown, but they occurred when COVID-19 rates were high and vaccinations were either unavailable or not widely used. Other reports have shown that many people avoided hospital and doctor visits early in the pandemic. Other possible reasons: Women lacked health insurance or lived far from a hospital and couldn't make it there in time. Previous research suggests that about 1 in 4 home births are unplanned.

Jade Godbolt, of Dallas, had her second child at a birthing center in 2021, partly to avoid hospital risks of COVID-19 and to experience a more natural environment. The experience went so well that she and her husband chose a home birth for their third, a son born last month. They'd been working with a midwife but labor went so fast that the baby came before she arrived.

Godbolt, a 31-year-old beauty and lifestyle online content creator, says there were no complications and she and her son are doing well.

"I believed that my body could do what it was made to do and I wanted to be in the comfort of my home to do that," she said.

The American College of



In this photo provided by Mark Godbolt Jr., his wife, Jade Godbolt, nurses her newborn child at their Dallas-area home in October 2022.

Associated Press

Obstetricians and Gynecologists notes that while home births typically involve fewer medical procedures than hospital births, they're riskier. It advises against home births for certain situations including multiple births and among women who previously delivered via cesar-

ean section.

"Hospitals and accredited birth centers are the safest places to give birth, because although serious complications associated with labor and delivery are rare, they can be catastrophic," said Dr. Jeffrey Ecker, a former chair of the group's committee on ob-

stetric practice and chief of obstetrics and gynecology at Massachusetts General Hospital. □



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Assistant Director
Xiomara Arends

Editors
Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks
Angenette Figueroa

Sales
Mark Gomes
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds
classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection
accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website
Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
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'The Menu,' with Anya Taylor-Joy, serves up satire

By JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

"What are we eating? A Rolex?"

So quips Margot (Anya Taylor-Joy) in Mark Mylod's "The Menu" as she waits with her date, Tyler (Nicholas Hoult), a devoted foodie who has landed them a reservation at the exclusive restaurant Hawthorne. Like the opening of Rian Johnson's upcoming "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery," an eclectic, upscale bunch gathers eagerly on a dock to be ferried to a private island. The movie, like their meal, unfolds as a series of courses, each more elaborate, and sinister, than the last. This is such rarified haute cuisine that entrees are promised that will not just represent food realms like protein and fungi but "entire ecosystems." A paired pinot wine is said to feature "a faint sense of longing and regret." Julian Slowik (Ralph Fiennes), Hawthorne's celebrity chef, presides over the restaurant less like a cook than a military commander or, possibly, a god. "Do not eat," Slowik tells the diners. "Taste." He is, to say the least, not someone James Corden would want to quibble with.



This image released by Searchlight Pictures shows Ralph Fiennes, right, and Anya Taylor-Joy in a scene from the film "The Menu."

Associated Press

The world of fine dining has, for a while now, been ripe for satire. And "The Menu" happily supplies a heaping plate of it. The film, which opens in theaters Friday, may be aimed at somewhat low-hanging fruit and may ultimately not have all that much to chew on. But Mylod, who directed a number of the episodes to "Succession," brings an icy, stylish flare in another kind of cleverly staged eat-the-rich comedy that particularly thanks to the elite eye-rolling of Taylor-Joy and

Fiennes' anguished artist is still a very tasty snack. The screenwriters Seth Reiss and Will Tracy, both veterans of the Onion, bake an amuse bouche of commentaries on class and service industry dynamics into an increasingly unhinged, and bloody, romp that doesn't offer too many surprises but consistently hits a satirical sweet spot. Dining alongside Margo and Tyler are a trio of tech bros (Arturo Castro, Rob Yang, Mark St. Cyr), a movie star (John Leguizamo) and

his assistant (Aimee Carrero), a prominent food critic and her editor (Janet McTeer, Paul Adelstein) and a married couple who are Hawthorne regulars (Reed Birney, Judith Light). From the beginning, the question of whether they're worthy of the brilliance they're about to be served is a pervasive tension a feeling that accelerates absurdly and disturbingly as the evening wears on. Elsa (Hong Chau), their guide and the restaurant's manger, certainly doesn't

seem to think so. She deliciously tours them through all things Hawthorne, inviting the guests to watch the chefs in the open kitchen "while they innovate," announcing dishes like "a breadless bread plate" and generally stealing the show. Her pretentiousness is merciless and grows increasingly less subtle. In the ear of one complaining tech bro she whispers: "You will get less than you desire and more than you deserve." The same, perhaps, could be said of "The Menu," a film with many tantalizing ingredients. Of all the patrons, Margot fits in the least, something that Julian recognizes immediately. His immaculately orchestrated morality play isn't intended to have a place setting for her. As we can see in how she winces when Tyler describes the "mouthfeel" of a meal, she doesn't worship at the same altar of high cuisine. But even as "The Menu" teeters unevenly in its third act and things get gruesomely less appetizing, its greasy last bites succeed in capturing one common aspect of molecular gastronomy: "The Menu" will leave you hungry. □

Leno has surgery for burns from car fire, in good condition

By LYNN ELBER

AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Jay Leno underwent surgery for serious burns suffered when flames erupted as he worked on a vintage car and remains hospitalized for further treatment, the physician overseeing his care said Wednesday. The former "Tonight Show" host was in good condition and his wife, Mavis, is with him at the Grossman Burn Center north of Los Angeles, said Peter H. Grossman, medical director of the center at West Hills Hospital. "He is in good spirits today," Grossman told a televised news conference. Last weekend, Leno suffered burns to his face, hands

and chest that the plastic surgeon categorized as second-degree or verging on more severe. Some of the facial wounds "are a little bit deeper and

a little more concerning" because they're showing signs of progressing to third-degree, as can happen with burns, Grossman said. Treatment intended to

keep the burns from worsening includes high-pressure oxygen therapy to stimulate healing, along with surgery in which the burn wounds are cleaned and shaved away, he said. A temporary "biological skin substitute" is placed over the area, he said. Leno came through one surgery well and a second is planned this week, Grossman said. The comedian is up and walking, telling jokes and is a hit with the staff, even giving out cookies to young patients. The fire occurred at the Burbank garage where Leno stores his famed collection of cars and other motor vehicles. In a statement earlier this week, Leno referred

to the burns as "serious" but said he would need only "a week or two to get back on my feet." Grossman said he appreciated Leno's eagerness but has cautioned him to be realistic. "I had to tell him that he needs to step back a little bit and just realize that some of this takes time," he said. "He's very compliant, he understands that. I think he's realizing that he does need to perhaps take it a little slower than he initially anticipated." The doctor said he expects Leno to make a full recovery but that it was too early to know if there would be "remnants" of the injury. He didn't elaborate. □



Jay Leno attends the Hand in Hand: A Benefit for Hurricane Harvey Relief in Los Angeles on Sept. 12, 2017.

Associated Press

Number of women working in the NFL steadily rising

By ROB MAADDI
AP Pro Football Writer

From the owner's suite to the front office to the sideline, the number of women in the NFL is steadily rising. And, they're here to stay. Kalen Jackson was born into football, one of three daughters for Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay. She got her introduction to the sport attending community events. Now, she has a seat at the table for owners' meetings.

Sam Rapoport fell in love with football the first time she held a ball and threw a spiral as a 12-year-old growing up in Canada. Rapoport ended up becoming a professional quarterback in a women's tackle football league and has spent two decades working to expand career opportunities for women in the sport.

Ashton Washington was surrounded by football as a kid in Texas, but she says she preferred playing with Barbie dolls. By high school, Washington wanted a career in football. Last year, the Chicago Bears hired her as the first full-time female scout in team history. Katie Sylvan grew up in San Diego rooting for the Chargers. She was determined to find a job in football and applied for the NFL's junior rotational program while in college. After nine years working for the league, Sylvan was hired by the



Sam Rapoport, NFL senior director of diversity, equity and inclusion, smiles during an interview over Zoom from New York on Nov. 10, 2022.

Associated Press

Chargers to be the team's director of football administration.

The overall percentage of women in the NFL's league office is at an all-time high of 41.3% in 2022 with 319 females holding various positions. The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport said in its 2022 racial and gender report card that the league office "has been a model of diversity and inclusion for their clubs to follow."

"To see so many things changing that weren't this way when I was little is super exciting," Jackson, the Colts vice chair/owner, said on the AP Pro Football

Podcast last month. "Being from a family of three girls and always being told you belong here and your opinion about this matters, we definitely had a blessing to have a very passionate girl dad, as they say."

Rapoport, the NFL's senior director of diversity, equity and inclusion, is determined to continue opening doors for women in the league.

"I was somewhat relentless with the idea that I was put on this planet to work in football in some way," said Rapoport.

Rapoport runs the NFL's Women's Forum, an annual event that connects

participants working in college football with owners, general managers, head coaches and club executives. More than 225 female coaching, scouting and operations candidates have been hired since the forum started in 2017.

"We just put women in a position to impress people," Rapoport said. "Half our fan base are women. Why aren't they working in it? We're working toward that."

In June, the Cleveland Browns named Catherine Raiche assistant general manager and vice presi-

dent of football operations, making her the highest-ranking female executive in the NFL. A month later, Sandra Douglass Morgan became the first Black female president of an NFL team when the Las Vegas Raiders hired her.

Washington first joined the Bears as an intern in 2021 after working in recruiting at the University of Illinois. She was promoted to scout there are 33 female scouts in the NFL later that summer. In May, she became the Bears player personnel coordinator, pro scouting.

"I feel like it's a lot of pressure on me and other females across the league because you want to set the bar and you also want to exceed your personal expectations," Washington said.

There are six women who are full-time coaches in the NFL, including Tampa Bay Buccaneers assistant defensive line coach Lori Locust and director of rehabilitation/performance coach Maral Javadifar. Washington Commanders assistant running backs coach Jennifer King, New York Giants offensive quality control coach Angela Baker, Cleveland Browns chief of staff/assistant wide receivers coach Callie Brownson and Philadelphia Eagles sports performance coach Autumn Lockwood are the others. □

Wimbledon relaxes all-white clothing rule for women

LONDON (AP) — Wimbledon is relaxing its requirement for all-white clothing to allow female players to wear colored undershorts to be more comfortable on their periods.

Wimbledon's strict policy about all-white attire for players is one of the best-known features of the grass-court Grand Slam tournament, but the All England Club on Thursday said it decided to update the rules after discussions "with the WTA, clothing manufacturers and medical teams on how best to

support women and girls competing at the championships."

The new rules state that women can now "wear solid, mid/dark-colored undershorts provided they are no longer than their shorts or skirt." All other requirements for clothing and accessories remain unchanged, including the stipulation that "competitors must be dressed in suitable tennis attire that is almost entirely white."

"We are committed to supporting the players and listening to their feedback as

to how they can perform at their best," said Sally Bolton, the chief executive of the All England Club. "It is our hope that this rule adjustment will help players focus purely on their performance by relieving a potential source of anxiety."

The All England Club also said Wimbledon recorded its second-highest ever profit of 47.1 million (\$55.5 million) in 2022, which trailed behind only 2019. Of that, 90% will be distributed to the Lawn Tennis Association "for the benefit of British tennis." □



Barbora Krejčíková, top right, and Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic, celebrate after beating China's Shuai Zhang, bottom left, and Belgium's Elise Mertens during the final of the women's doubles at the Wimbledon tennis championships in London, on July 10, 2022.

Associated Press

Manfred sure Mets-Yanks collusion query will find no issue

By **LARRY FLEISHER**

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred confirmed Thursday that Major League Baseball is looking into potentially improper communication between the New York Mets and Yankees regarding star free agent Aaron Judge and said he is confident the inquiry will find no issues.

"I'm absolutely confident that the clubs behaved in a way that was consistent with the agreement," Manfred said Thursday, referring to the league's collective bargaining agreement.

"This was based on a newspaper report. We will put ourselves in position to demonstrate credibly to the MLBPA that this is not an issue. I'm sure that's going to be an outcome, but obviously we understand the emotion that surrounds that word (collusion) and we'll proceed accordingly."

The Athletic first reported MLB was investigating the teams after a story on SNY.com, the website for the Mets' television network, said a "mutually respectful relationship" between Mets owner Steve Cohen and Yankees owner Hal Steinbrenner would prevent a "high-profile bidding war" for Judge. The 30-year-old is expected to be named AL MVP on Thursday night and could command over \$300 million in free agency.



New York Yankees Aaron Judge reacts as he crosses the plate after hitting a solo home run against the Cleveland Guardians during the second inning of Game 5 of an American League Division Series, Tuesday, Oct. 18, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

Judge turned down a \$213.5 million, seven-year offer from the Yankees before opening day, then hit an AL record 62 home runs. According to the report, the union requested MLB to look into communications specifically between Cohen, who purchased the Mets from the Wilpon family for \$2.4 billion in 2020, and Steinbrenner, who took over as the Yankees' managing general partner following the 2008 season. Manfred, speaking at the end of this week's owners' meetings, said he will not directly be involved in the investigation.

There is also concern from players about comments made recently by Houston owner Jim Crane. Speaking to MLB.com, Crane said AL Cy Young Award winner Justin Verlander "is seeking a deal similar" to the \$130 million, three-year contract Max Scherzer signed with the Mets shortly before a three-month lockout began last year.

After the lockout, Manfred said one of his goals was to improve relations with players following contentious labor battles around restarting play during the coronavirus-shortened 2020 season and the expi-

ration of the CBA after the 2021 season.

"I think those conversations were instructive, positive, helpful in terms of building a better relationship, which always begins with better communication," Manfred said of his meetings with players. "I was encouraged by players to continue the practice, and I do intend to continue that practice."

The last time collusion came up as an issue between players and owners was five years ago, when the union considered filing a grievance. Ultimately, the union declined to file a grievance, though the

slow pace of free agency in subsequent seasons led agents to believe collusion may be occurring.

In 2006, MLB paid \$12 million in claims pertaining to the 2002-03 offseason. Owners also agreed to pay \$280 million to players for violations following the 1985, '86 and '87 seasons.

Manfred was also asked Thursday about the league's relationship with FTX, a cryptocurrency exchange being investigated by state and federal authorities for allegedly investing depositors funds in ventures without their approval. Manfred admitted the recent news of a class-action lawsuit against FTX, along with celebrities, athletes and teams who promoted it, was "jarring." MLB was not named as a defendant.

Manfred said FTX would not return as a sponsor for the league in 2023.

"We had been really careful in moving forward in this space," Manfred said. "We've been really religious about staying away from coins themselves as opposed to more company-based sponsorships. We think that was prudent particularly given the way things unfolded. We will, I think, proceed with caution in the future and of course how much we have to worry about it's going to depend on when this exactly lands, as well." □



Tampa Bay Buccaneers defensive end Ndamukong Suh (93) looks on during a NFL divisional playoff football game between the Los Angeles Rams and Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Jan. 23, 2022 in Tampa, Fla.

Associated Press

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

Three-time All-Pro defensive tackle Ndamukong

AP source: Ndamukong Suh joining Eagles on 1-year deal

Suh is joining the Philadelphia Eagles, a person familiar with the deal told The Associated Press.

The Eagles and Suh agreed on a one-year contract on Thursday, according to the person who spoke on condition of anonymity because the team hasn't announced the signing. Suh bolsters a defensive line that also added veteran Linval Joseph this week. Suh posted an emoji of an eagle on Twitter.

The Eagles (8-1) are shoring up their run defense after giving up 152 yards on the ground to the Washington Commanders in their first loss of the season on Monday. They have the 20th-ranked rush defense and are 25th in yards per carry allowed at 4.7.

With rookie Jordan Davis sidelined by a high ankle sprain and Marlon Tuipulotu also on injured reserve, Philadelphia moved quickly this week to improve the

interior of the defensive line. Suh and Joseph join six-time Pro Bowl defensive tackle Fletcher Cox and Javon Hargrave inside.

The 35-year-old Suh spent the previous three seasons with the Buccaneers and had six sacks last season. He helped Tampa Bay win the Super Bowl following the 2020 season.

Suh was the No. 2 overall pick by Detroit in the 2010 draft. He has 70 1/2 sacks and made five Pro Bowls. □